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ABSTRACT

The national field study of women's re-entry programs in community colleges reported here was done to identify factors that impeded or facilitated the progress of these programs. After an introduction, the content is presented in three sections. The first section deals with perspective transformation, the adult development process occurring in the personal development of women participating in college re-entry programs. It first describes the process by which culturally induced dependency roles and relationships are recognized and action is taken to overcome them. The process is then analyzed in terms of re-entry patterns and process phases. Then follows a discussion on how re-entry programs facilitate building self-confidence and constructing a support structure. In section 2, the focus is on program dynamics, including program types, setting goals, relations within the college, and program directors and staff. The last section, on assessing change, briefly covers psychometric approaches and assessing perspective discrepancy. (EM)

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EDUCATION FOR PERSPECTIVE TRANSFORMATION

Women's Re-entry Programs in Community Colleges

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with contributions by Victoria Marsick

1978
Center for Adult Education
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Introduction

This report describes and discusses the findings that emerged from a study of re-entry programs for women in community colleges across the nation. The programs represent a new departure in higher education that has arisen in response to a new and continuing trend. They are designed to assist women who are resuming their education or are considering employment after an extended hiatus. Some of these women are interested in exploring options for their futures or in experiencing personal growth; others are seeking to enter or re-enter the job market or to effect an occupational change. Whatever their motivation, they constitute a sizeable and growing student body with distinctive problems and needs.

The primary thrust of the study was to identify factors that characteristically impede or facilitate the progress of these re-entry programs. It is our hope that such knowledge will promote the replication of successful programs and contribute guidelines for program evaluation. Despite their increasing importance, very little has been written about the re-entry programs and almost no systematic information on them is available. An indispensable first step toward assessment and the improvement of program quality, therefore, seemed to be the development of a qualitative data base specifying the most significant factors influencing the programs now in operation.

To accomplish this objective, the Center for Adult Education at Columbia University's Teachers College drew on the inductive methodology of grounded theory,[1] which it had employed with gratifying results in a recent analysis of adult education programs.[2] Our data are derived from an intensive field study of 12 diversified programs, comprehensive analytical descriptions of an additional 24 programs, and responses to a mail inquiry by another 314. Details on the sample, methodology, and theoretical framework of the study are presented in the Appendix.

The Emergence of Re-entry Programs

Women's re-entry programs are a new phenomenon in community colleges. Although the pioneer efforts go back to the mid-sixties, most were established in the early seventies when the effects of the women's movement were being felt by public service institutions throughout the United

States. The number of women aged 25 to 34 attending college rose by more than 100 percent from 1970 to 1975.

Among our 36 case studies, the three oldest programs were initiated by and for middle-class women in urban areas—where social innovations usually originate. All three were originally organized by women's groups and staffed by volunteers. At this time public funds for private women's organizations were not readily available. Consequently, these and other early groups became associated in area consortia and attempted to affiliate with local universities. However, it was the community service programs in community colleges that proved responsive to their proposals, and in each case the programs eventually found a home at the midtown campus of the local multi-campus college. Although situated in working-class areas, participants were predominantly suburban housewives.

In the early seventies, there was a proliferation of re-entry programs, especially for middle-class women; they were commonly located in the college unit charged with community services or continuing education. Programs were usually preceded by testing the market with one or two workshops or other public events such as a lecture series or open house. A first course dealing with career planning was often offered to the public over a four or five-week period. Workshops characteristically involved a sequence of speakers discussing their various occupations. In several instances panelists became the directors of the re-entry programs that subsequently took shape. The scope of programs expanded as the need to focus on self-exploration, career development, and personal growth grew increasingly apparent.

Other programs evolved as the result of close cooperation between a community college and a university, cooperation with a model program at another college, or the efforts of some sort of consortium. Almost all these programs were initially funded by an external grant, often through Title I of the Higher Education Act. In these cases, the re-entry program involved a replication of an apparently successful program located somewhere nearby, or at least within the state. This pattern of development included both academic and what we call community-oriented programs, which are not academic in nature.

In cases where women have enrolled in established college courses after an initial orienting workshop or course, the college has seemed to give the program greater administrative support. When the re-entry programs have involved a more independent and untraditional sequence of nonacademic courses or learning experiences devoted to self-exploration, career planning, and personal growth, they have found themselves ignored or sometimes viewed with suspicion and occasionally with hostility by faculty and even college administrators. Program directors often have been made to feel like outsiders. When the director of such a program has not possessed academic credentials on a par with the academic faculty, she has sometimes experienced considerable difficulty, especially if her program has

been attractive to women in the community and seen as a plum worth fighting for. Nonacademic programs frequently encounter serious financial trouble when their initial external grant runs out. Particularly when a university has played a collaborating and fostering role, there is apt to be distrust of the program's power and of what it is trying to do.

Several academic re-entry programs were initiated by college faculty, partly in response to the women's movement and partly as efforts to meet the distinctive needs and problems of women returning to the campus. Resulting programs have been predictably academic in nature. They are geared toward modifying administrative requirements and providing services to facilitate the attainment of a degree.

Regardless of community setting, there has been a tendency for re-entry programs to respond principally to the needs of middle-class women, although deliberate attempts have been made to reach a different target population. Even then, however, one encounters few program adaptations for working-class women. This middle-class orientation is most pronounced in nonacademic, noncredit programs focused on direction finding. In part, this is because financial aid is, by and large, restricted to matriculated, degree students, and the noncredit programs must rely heavily on income generated by student fees.

I. ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND THE RE-ENTRY EXPERIENCE

1. Perspective Transformation

The major theoretical finding of this study is the identification of perspective transformation as the central process occurring in the personal development of women participating in college re-entry programs. Meaning perspectives are the psychological structures within which we locate and define ourselves and our relationships. By recognizing the social, economic, political, psychological, and religious assumptions that shape these structures—presuppositions inherited but rarely examined critically—we can reconstruct our personal frame of reference, our self-concept, goals, and criteria for evaluating change. New priorities for action are likely to result. In identifying the key function of re-entry programs as the transformation of meaning perspectives, we are encouraged to believe that we may have identified a salient dimension of adult development and a significant derivative function of continuing education.

Normal growth in adulthood involves a succession of responses to developmental challenges, referred to in the popular literature as "life crises." If in responding to these disorienting dilemmas the psychocultural assumptions upon which we have constructed our meaning perspectives become critically reappraised, we then move to a new phase of development. By gaining a clearer insight into the cultural and psychological forces that formerly limited our purview, we arrive at new perspectives for interpreting our lives.

Even apart from the re-entry experience, for many women the feeling of discontent—Betty Friedan's "problem without a name"—becomes capable of articulation through exposure to the rapidly changing social norms relating to women's potentialities for self-fulfillment. But this is a special kind of dilemma. Simply learning more, solving problems more effectively, or acquiring a skill or new behavior will not resolve it. The full transformation cycle encompasses a larger process. It demands, first of all, self-examination, a critical appraisal of sex-role assumptions, and alienation from past social roles and expectation. Beyond that, it requires exploring options for new ways of living and making provisional efforts to try out new roles: playing the new roles will build competence and consequently self-confidence (academic roles are often used as testing grounds for sub-

sequent role experimentation). In addition, the transformation process involves planning a course of action, acquiring the knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans, and finally a reintegration into society on one's own terms, with a new, inner-directed stance.

The process is illustrated in part by consciousness raising, for many the heart of the women's movement. It is ironic that this educational development, which has transformed the perspectives of thousands of women, has never found its way into the literature of adult education. Through small groups fostering intensive self-examination, often without a formal leader, women have come to see themselves as products of previously unchallenged and oppressive cultural expectations. The perception of these unexamined assumptions has led to changed perspectives on themselves and their relationships—often with dramatic consequences in terms of new action priorities. By becoming aware of hitherto unquestioned cultural myths (often internalized and reinforced by women themselves), they have found a new identity within a new meaning perspective entailing greater autonomy, enhanced personal control, and a sense of responsibility for their own lives.

Perspective Transformation in Re-entry Programs

The re-entry programs perform a distinctive function as catalytic support systems fostering an altered perspective. By encouraging a critical appraisal of the culturally determined sex stereotypes that women have internalized and defended, they open up new vistas for self-realization. A study of 145 women in an Illinois re-entry program, for example, found that at the start only 20 percent considered themselves active feminists and 29 percent reported satisfaction with the traditional feminine role. Following their college experience, almost 90 percent reported movement toward the feminist viewpoint, over 75 percent saw themselves as active feminists, and only 9 percent still adhered to traditional views.[3]

Re-entry programs seldom use the term consciousness raising. There is little doubt, however, that this is seen as their central educational mission and that their effectiveness goes far beyond that of the usual consciousness-raising group. Counseling, group support, staff models, rap sessions, and direction-finding classes directly address the initial phases of perspective transformation. A supportive climate, the "reflooring" of academic requirements, opportunities for reframing goals, and guidance in the acquisition of academic competence create conditions designed to build the confidence that is essential to the process. Academic enrichment and practical, occupationally oriented courses provide opportunities to take preliminary steps in implementing action toward goals defined in the process of perspective transformation. New insights, roles, and values can be further explored and refined, and the feasibility of moving toward new goals tested realistically. The resources of the campus can prove invaluable for exploring new career options and for implementing plans that call for

specialized educational preparation. Individual learning needs and goals can be accommodated.

Although there is understanding of the basic developmental processes involved, programs are constrained by limited funds, a scarcity of staff equipped for this nontraditional function, and lack of dependable information about how best to structure the relevant educational experiences. The core direction-finding function, for example, is often confined to interpreting test results, orthodox counseling, the use of commercially packaged programs, and pep talks. Programs such as the College Entrance Examination Board's Decision Making course, seminars on value clarification, standard human relations "skill exercises," and even Transcendental Meditation are indiscriminately mixed with standard college offerings. There is much stringing together of unrelated courses or workshops, all in the name of direction finding. Probably because there is no common definition of consciousness raising, program directors apply the term to almost any educational experience. The priority for maintaining a supportive social climate can be reduced to a counterproductive set of clichés about openness, empathy, and honesty in communication. The direction-finding function and the goal of perspective transformation are not as yet well established within higher education; consequently, little consensus is to be found on standards of practice. There is urgent need for research and development here.

Because the programs are new, directors tend to seek out ideas from each other. Professional associations exist in Washington, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Massachusetts, the Southwest, California and elsewhere. Universities have played a major role by developing prototype courses, like the University of Washington's Soundings and the University of Connecticut's Find Your Way. New programs have been encouraged through the Pennsylvania consortium, which links Temple University with colleges in the area. The staff of re-entry programs meet in sessions of national professional associations like the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Sometimes a successful program has served as a model for others in its locality.

Although direction-finding procedures do not follow a common pattern, there is a general stress on women "getting in touch" with themselves, on individual or group counseling by peers or professionsals, on rap groups, on aptitude and interest testing, and on one or a series of credit or noncredit courses thought relevant to direction finding. In short-term programs designed for supportive exploration this may constitute the entire agenda, sometimes supplemented by various public events—such as short workshops or lecture series—and other elective courses. Programs with an academic emphasis go in another direction. After an initial orientation or one or more direction-finding courses and counseling, the program's academic offerings are themselves often redefined to facilitate the direction-finding process.

At first, women in the academic programs may not be ready for an extended process of self-development. Nevertheless, they inevitably find themselves caught up in pressures for change—from a new awareness of increased options, gains in their sense of competence and self-confidence, group support, an ethos reinforcing the ideology of personal responsibility, and continued contact with concerned staff.

College re-entry programs are performing an unprecedented function in providing education for perspective transformation. They may represent the most significant educational effort directed at adult developmental needs to appear thus far on the nation's campuses. Indeed, they may well be establishing a prototype for the future course of adult higher education. The re-entry function is one for which every university and college will have to plan.

2. The Transformation Process

The process of perspective transformation begins when a woman becomes aware of the ways cultural assumptions and their psychological consequences have placed their stamp upon her. She now sees herself as the hapless player of socially prescribed roles—daughter, girl friend, wife, mother, lady, neighbor, church member, social club officer, mother-in-law, among others. The women's movement has created a supportive climate for this kind of personal reappraisal by publicizing the constraints upon personal development, autonomy, and self-determination imposed by such stereotypes and by providing new role models. But to negotiate the process of perspective transformation can be painful and treacherous. A woman's very sense of identity and integrity has traditionally been invested in the conventional wife and mother roles and her most rewarding successes achieved in fulfilling their demands.

Many women in re-entry programs find they can't stand the heat and go back into the kitchen. They will say, for example:

> I spent so many years developing my marriage and my relationships with my kids—that's my priority and that's what's important to me. I see school as an outside source of stimulation. I do homework with my sons. It's very interesting to share with them, and they share with me. Maybe I'll get a degree, maybe not; I don't know.

A meaning perspective is the structure of psychocultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated to past experience. It is a way of seeing yourself and your relationships. More than that, it establishes the criteria that determine what you will experience—criteria for identifying what you will find interesting, for deciding which problems are of concern to you, for determining what you are prepared to learn and from whom, for determining values, for setting priorities for action, and for defining the meaning and direction of self-fulfillment and personal success. Because the search for meaning is so much a *sine qua non* of the human condition, we move as consistently as we can toward perspectives that are more inclusive and discriminating and that integrate our experience.

This movement may be understood to constitute the process of maturity.

In childhood, maturity is a *formative* process—one of socialization, of learning adult roles. In adulthood the process is *transformative*—involving alienation from those roles, reframing new perspectives, and reengaging life with a greater degree of self-determination. Perspective transformation is a generic process of adult development; it is a kind of learning—perhaps the most important kind—that enables us to move through the critical transitional periods of adulthood. Jean Miller writes:

> It is true that the very ways we find to conceptualize experience are in large measure given us by the culture in which we learn "how to think and feel" or even learn what thinking or feeling are. But people are also continually straining against the boundaries given by that culture—and seeking the means to understand and to express the many experiences for which it does not suffice. This is true of all people. For women today it is a pre-eminent factor.[4]

For a perspective transformation to occur, a painful reappraisal of our current perspective must be thrust upon us. Among the re-entry women whom we interviewed, the disturbing event was often external in origin—the death of a husband, a divorce, the loss of a job, a change of city of residence, retirement, an empty nest, a remarriage, the near fatal accident of an only child, or jealousy of a friend who had launched a new career successfully. These disorienting dilemmas of adulthood can dissociate one from long-established modes of living and bring into sharp focus questions of identity, of the meaning and direction of one's life.

Patterns of Re-entry

In the preceding section the transformation cycle was described as often involving: (1) a disorienting dilemma; (2) self-examination; (3) a critical assessment of sex-role assumptions and a sense of alienation from taken-for-granted social roles and expectations; (4) relating one's discontent to a current public issue; (5) exploring options for new ways of living; (6) building competence and self-confidence in new roles; (7) planning a course of action and acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans; (9) provisional efforts to try new roles; and (10) a reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective.

There are distinctive psychological patterns of re-entry. They are of significance for the process of perspective transformation and for efforts by educators to meet the needs and motivations of learners at different levels of development. Whether or not a woman comes into the program in response to a disorienting dilemma makes a crucial difference. Her goals may be specific and limited and may not always mesh with program priorities. She may be merely curious about alternative career possibilities, seeking nothing more than vocational testing and career counseling, or for a way to get a better job. Such *conventional learners*, who are still fully assimilated within a traditional cultural perspective, may well complete the re-entry program with enhanced self-confidence, having made progress

toward their objectives and perhaps having acquired a useful skill (how to write a resume). For most new vistas do open up, insights are gained, attitudes modified or changed. Many have expected that they will be told what to do and grow to realize the answer must come from themselves. These may be important learning achievements, but they are not perspective transformation.

Reactions to the transformation process by conventional learners can vary from bemused intolerance:

> I'm seeing a lot of uptight women going to school who are pushing themselves to the umpteenth degree. I hear them say, "I'm going to shove hot dogs into the kids tonight, I'm going to take tranquilizers and lock the door and get this paper done." I see lots of pressure.

to outright rejection and a retreat into familiar roles:

> I didn't want to give up my freedom. I decided that during my participation in the program. I had the opportunity to travel with my husband, and I didn't want to give that up. And if I joined the work force, I would have to. I don't think my husband wants me to work.

to more devious modes of evasion. A re-entry graduate who returned to study the process told us:

> Whatever stage of life you are in, you get something different out of it. There were women who were only looking for another "project"—another thing. You could just see they had no motivation. They take courses as an excuse to convince themselves that they don't want to do anything, and they're just looking to say, "You see? I'm not ready for it."

In contrast to the conventional learners are the transformation *threshold learners*, whose participation in a program is prompted by a disorienting dilemma. The source of the dilemma will strongly influence the nature of their re-entry career; two different types can be distinguished. One is an external event—the death of a husband, divorce, loss of a job, moving to a new city. The other is an internal, subjective experience—the feeling that life is not fulfilling, a sense of deprivation, the conviction that being only a housewife forecloses access to other rewarding experiences. Because the externally caused dilemma is likely to be less negotiable and to be more intense, it will more frequently lead to a perspective transformation. When the dilemma has an internal source, the degree of intensity accompanying it matters considerably and is often difficult to evaluate. It is hard to assess how much pressure is impinging on a woman who states that she enrolled because "I was planning my life around soap operas. . . . the only topic I had to discuss with my husband was what I saw on afternoon TV," or that "I told my husband during the summer, 'I've had it—I can't stand this nothingness—I feel like I'm vegetating. How much can I wash and iron and clean the house and all that nonsense?' " These women may be responding

to changing social norms that require them to define their situation in this way and to explore other options actively. The women responding to an external dilemma, on the other hand, are likely to come into the program more traumatized and in a stage of panic about the urgent need to change.

Threshold learners do not move through the transformation cycle in the same sequence of experiences because their personal histories differ widely. A classic case is the *housewife learner*. She has had little or no previous work experience or recent educational experience. She has never seriously questioned her second-class status as a woman, the restricted roles in which she has invested her life, or the values that sustain them. She is now compelled by circumstances to make a change in her life and feels disoriented, inadequate, frightened, and uncertain about her future and her goals. She has never had to take full responsibility for herself before.

The *self-awareness learner* comes into the re-entry program after psychotherapy, participation in a consciousness-raising group, or a related experience. For her, activities focused on self-examination or exploring the personal effects of sex stereotypes can be redundant and of little interest. One hears: "The course was geared for the woman who was fighting her way out of the house. That wasn't my background. Ego building and consciousness raising were emphasized, and I felt I was past that stage. I was interested in career counseling."

Work-wise learners are women who have had a diversified and somewhat rewarding record of employment. Many of these women, especially those who have held other than routine clerical or menial jobs, are unlikely to have overwhelming doubts about making it in the world of work or in new career roles. Confidence building for them will more likely center around support that enables them to gain needed competencies in academic roles. Although the black and ethnic awareness movements have served a perspective transformation function for many women of relatively little education, most re-entry program for such working-class women have found it desirable to deal with them as conventional learners who are there to find the way to a better job situation. It is not uncommon, however, to find these women coming back at a later point in their lives to seek meaning and direction through just the sort of critical self-examination inherent in perspective transformation.

Other re-entry women will be *study-wise learners*, who have taken college courses or adult education courses through a college extension or continuing education program; some have college degrees. Fears about academic work will rarely be a problem for them, and they will probably have little need for academic skill remediation or special help. A good many will have taken courses on women's roles and have considerable understanding of sex stereotypes and their effects.

Still other women in the program will be *career-wise learners*, who have already studied alternative career possibilities as conventional learners or

have been given vocational tests in the past and perhaps received career counseling. For them, the systematic exploration of career options must be organized differently than for women who have not undertaken it before.

Some are *emancipated learners*, who have never fully accepted the inferior roles traditionally assigned to women. As a result they have always felt alienated. They are likely to be interested in finding a specific career direction rather than engaging in more self-examination.

A woman becomes a *transformation learner* when she realizes how the culture and her own attitudes have conspired to define and delimit her self-conception, her life style, and her options in terms of a set of prescribed, stereotypic roles. As a result of recognizing these taken-for-granted cultural expectations and how they have shaped the way she thinks and feels about herself and her relationships, the transformation learner comes to identify her personal problem as a common one and a public issue. The old set of "rules to live by" in fulfilling traditional role expectations are now perceived as constraints to personal development, which have foreclosed promising options for self-actualization without allowing her the opportunity to test their relevance and value within her own experience. The transformation process—which may have begun for these women before re-entry—involves a critically reflexive awareness of our own criteria for intentionality, for the way we typify reality, for the way we make value judgments, and for understanding our own identity.

Bringing these unexamined cultural assumptions and attitudes into "critical consciousness" makes a woman aware that she is trapped in her own history, and this insight precipitates a concerted effort to extricate herself. The first response is a search for options, for new roles and role models more consistent with the broader perspective from which she now views her reality.

Phases in the Transformation Process

Perspective transformation has been characterized as a process, but it is a process in which you make choices that are to shape your own destiny. It is more accurately thought of as a praxis, a dialectic in which understanding and action interact to produce an altered state of being. One must go beyond the exploration of options to formulate a plan for action. The plan may be ill conceived, tentative, provisional, incomplete, and vague with respect to specific outcomes, but the transformation learner must act on her own reality. This often involves no more than deciding to see whether or not she can acquire the skills or credentials she deems necessary for taking further, more decisive action in choosing a specific career or life style. Above all, the action plan must be predicated upon a firm commitment to assume responsibility for her own life. Both situational factors and personality determine when, where, and how an action orientation becomes translated into behavior.

Women enter the transformation cycle at different points. While it is

useful to analyze the process in terms of phases, it should be clear that the phases do not follow an invariant sequence. We can differentiate modal patterns, but one should not equate the phase and stage metaphor of developmental psychology with the dynamic process of negotiation involved in perspective transformation. I believe it was Jerome Kagan who observed that development is less like moving from one railroad box car to the next and more like leaping from lily pad to lily pad, leaving some baggage behind at each leap. His image is particularly relevant for characterizing development in the adult years.

While it is true that one can never return to an old perspective once a transformation has occurred, the process is seldom one of consistent forward movement. A woman can get stalled—temporarily or permanently—at any phase; typically, difficult negotiation and compromise, backsliding and self-deception occur. This is particularly true at two points. One is at the beginning, when exposing one's life roles and the feelings surrounding them to critical analysis threatens a long-established sense of order. As one re-entry student explained:

> I had all the old-fashioned ideas, and I found some of the new ideas difficult to follow through on. I took the program to pick a career and go to work. But I didn't. Instead, I found that I didn't know myself, didn't know the times—women's lib—and I just couldn't adjust to it. You can't just turn off a lifetime of doing things one way. The most important thing I got out of the course was to look at myself.

The other critical time is the point when a commitment to action should logically follow awareness and insight but is so threatening or demanding as to be immobilizing. However, the deterrent effect of the threats or demands of action is a function of how pressing the disorienting dilemma was that initiated the process and how effectively a woman has personalized and integrated into her experience what she learned about the psychocultural forces shaping her life.

The self-deception that can impede progress is dramatically illustrated in Roberta, a woman of thirty-eight. Soon after embarking on a re-entry program "to find a direction to go in terms of college or a job," she became intensely involved in a consciousness-raising group organized by an instructor. "We just went crazy and the things that came out of people who had it locked away were so painful that we all rather cried with whoever it was that was opening up." Despite the intense and empathetic nature of the experience, however, Roberta failed to personalize what she had learned about sex stereotypes and the common problems of women. Although she acquired the vocabulary and undoubtedly a measure of understanding, she was unable to integrate these insights into her experience. Instead, she misinterpreted what she learned to rationalize her inability to take action. Roberta tried volunteering but quit; she started a college course but dropped out. Her husband's business failed, but, despite earlier

experience as a secretary, she could not bring herself to take a job. Roberta justifies her inaction on the basis of what she feels she has learned, that "one should not do what others expect of them, only what one wants to do"—even if this is nothing.

Perspective transformation has another critically important dimension. It can lead progressively toward increased autonomy, self-determination, and responsibility—important gains in personal identity. But it can also simply involve a transfer of identification from one reference group to another; many conversions are like this. The quality of the new commitment is what makes the difference. Some women enter a consciousness-raising group and become psychologically assimilated uncritically, giving the group unconditional and final allegiance. The relationship is "organic" in that they become an integral part of a community in much the same sense that they functioned before in more traditional roles and relationships. The more that their commitments possess a *contractual* as opposed to an *organic* character, the greater the potentiality for future development.

A contractual solidarity involves no less of an intense commitment or the sharing of a new perspective than does a relationship based on identification, but it is given with a clear understanding that what each party offers is contingent upon mutually agreed upon conditions and that the contract is subject to periodic review and renegotiation. If, as time passes, what had been an indispensable mutual support group deteriorates into something less relevant to the changing needs of its members, they should have the option of deciding for themselves to leave the group or disband it. Yesterday's heresies are tomorrow's superstitions. The test of a better perspective is not only that it is more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative, and can deal with a wider range of experience, but also that it facilitates an eventual move to still broader perspectives. Contractual commitments of solidarity with society, institutions, ideologies, and persons—not simply uncritical organic relationships based upon identification—are significant indicators of maturity.

Perspective transformation is the process by which adults come to recognize culturally induced dependency roles and relationships and take action to overcome them. But perspective transformation and new action priorities must be reconciled with psychological patterns of long standing. Dependency has many faces. Roger Gould has identified the unexamined psychological assumptions of childhood which must be reassessed through perspective transformation to permit us to respond effectively to the age-related developmental tasks of adulthood.[5]

3. Building Confidence

Before a woman can take the first steps toward change, she must possess the self-confidence to try new roles. For many, building self-confidence is a critical initial goal. A typical program director will say: "We must get them convinced they can do it and then get them convinced they can continue, until they develop their own self-confidence."

It is not uncommon for re-entry women to expect teachers and counselors to "tell me what to do" when they first enter the program. Instead, they are often told what they *can* do, so that they may take the next steps to discovering the "what." Staff reorient women to a new sense of agency they might not have known they were capable of. Women are as culturally oppressed in their dependency roles as students as in their roles as women but tend to recognize this only later.

First Steps

Reorienting is often simple, verbal, direct, and frequent. Teachers advise women to consciously replace old "tapes" of inabilities and inaction with new "tapes" projecting images of action they would like to take. At other times, the message is much more subtle; staff will take a nondirective counseling approach, acting much as a sounding board or a mirror to encourage women to achieve awareness on their own. Strategies that support this kind of reinforcement reassure women of their abilities, removing anxiety and, in addition, offering role models.

Buffering is especially important in a woman's first contact with the program. First impressions are crucial. Stories abound about women who have been frightened away from college by real or imagined hurdles before even starting. Hence, as recruiters hasten to emphasize: "We try to take the fear out of coming back to school."

In structured programs reassurance can be sustained by pointing to the additional support system of interested teachers, counselors, and fellow students, and to facilities such as learning labs. Women in academic programs are assured that "what you have been doing outside of the school translates into real skills in the classroom," so that they will have less fear of the academic challenges. Perhaps most reassuring of all is the example of other women who have successfully made a transformation in their lives.

In structured programs, this modeling is systematically built into early contacts with the program, such as the open house. In other programs, women must find models through informal contacts, by encountering women lecturers at public events or interacting with program staff in briefer meetings.

It is important at this stage that the similarities between the re-entry women and the successful models are stressed in order to permit easy identification. At the open house women are told that "the other women will help you—they're interested in you, and are people like yourselves." When a women's center exists, it acts as a hub for this kind of informal contact among participants and staff. It is "a spot where you can go and find other persons like yourselves, who probably have struggled to come here like you may have, feeling a little uncomfortable and wondering why you left your home." Program administrators might wear what they call their "open house dresses" to remove any possible fears of a threatening "radical lib" image. The current student will tell a new recruit that "I am a mother like you." On a visiting day the program director may reduce status barriers when she joins the discussion in a course on the sociology of women as though she were a student, or cares for the crying child of a student who is in class.

Whether a program is structured or not, formal testing is frequently played down on first contact. Achievement tests tend to arouse added fears. While opinions vary on the value of using vocational, aptitude, and interest tests immediately, these also can create anxieties if women feel that they are not "measuring up" to some norm or if the tests confuse them about the interests they think they might have.

Testing brings up a major problem in early efforts to help women gain the confidence to make new choices. When women are insecure about what they do want, they are likely to expect tests or other guideposts to provide *the* answer for them. Teachers will tell them: "There are always those who want to take a test, be told what to take here, get trained for a job, and live happily ever after. That's the same myth as the marriage myth, and you all know what that is!"

Ideally, programs aim at individualizing the answers. In general, the message is: "You have to come to your own realizations about life, to see how far you can go with yourself." However, some programs do have definite ideas about the choices women should make. To the extent that they encourage a particular kind of transformation, they may offer perspectives that women take on temporarily until they become aware of the directions they wish to take. Other perspectives are frequently provided quite accidentally through contact with a teacher, counselor, or student, or through exposure to new ideas and life-styles.

Some colleges have several women's programs on campus, each with its own identity and objectives. On one campus, a basic re-entry program recruits from minorities and working-class women and emphasizes immedi-

ate jobs and the degree. In addition, the college offers a Women-in-Transition program appealing to middle-class women with more time to consider their options in nonacademic settings, while a women's studies program attracts full-time students with a feminist orientation. On some campuses, such programs are integrated under one director.

One valuable tool for taking on a new image is *labeling*; it can be both positive and negative. In its positive aspects, labeling provides women with a group self-image that they can identify with until individual identity is re-formed. To other students they are "re-entering" women with a legitimate place on campus, despite the fact that they are older than the typical undergraduate. However, labeling can also carry a class or goal bias, depending on the kind of program involved. Hence, programs must always walk a thin line between prescribing too much and too little.

Taking on a new self-concept equips a woman with a point of reference from which she can experiment with new behaviors and, through feedback, gain confidence in her ability to do new things well, even when choices may still be determined by others. In short courses, a woman who reaches this stage may not get beyond it. Her doing so will depend on whether she can follow up these first contacts with other experiences in and out of the program through which she develops specific competencies in her personal, academic, or job life. Structured programs facilitate such a development by helping a woman "hang in" during this difficult period. Often they provide her with assistance in meeting many of the responsibilities to home and family that otherwise would keep her away from college.

Competencies build over time; however, women frequently come to an awareness of a new competency through a particular turning point. They may do well in a course, test, or work experience that was previously a challenge. Some surprise themselves by suddenly handling relationships with husband, children, or friends in a more constructive way. The critical moment may occur when other women in the program offer enlightening comments about their general development. Or the turning point may be the product of specific help they, themselves, have provided as a tutor or peer counselor.

The feedback from these benchmark interactions facilitates perspective transformation by helping women "get in touch with themselves," so that they can build on newly realized potentialities in actualizing an altered self-concept. Nena and George O'Neill[6] refer to this process of looking inward as *centering*, a companion process to *focusing outward* or choosing among the options available those that best fulfill the centered self. Awareness is the crucial touchstone of the centering and focusing process.

Direction Finding

As women become aware of a new self-image, they are able to discover more of their own values, fears, and problems. Direction-finding courses that deal with value clarification, risk taking, decision making, and life planning can help to structure this learning experience for women who are

at a particularly receptive phase. In such courses, women work through problems and alternative solutions, making decisions about how solutions will "fit" personal needs. Particularly in academic programs, this self-development is carried over into other types of classes through an emphasis on learning contracts, selecting topics for papers and projects, taking sides in a debate, and asserting a viewpoint in a group discussion.

Here, the program often shifts to a social preoccupation. This happens when staff and students take cognizance of how personal problems are linked with public issues, with women's social and economic and cultural position in society. Academic programs tend to include at least one course that facilitates this shift—guidance or psychology classes, or a course on the sociology of women. In other cases, a wider range of women's studies courses may be encouraged or recommended. It is here that conflict between women's studies and re-entry programs can emerge, especially when students or program personnel take opposing radical or moderate positions on women's issues. Central to this conflict is the idea of what constitutes a liberated woman and how larger social questions are treated. It is further complicated by other financial, personal, and power issues.

In any event, social linkages are often developed inside classes through the *sharing* of personal experiences. This is encouraged by staff, who themselves contribute perspectives and insights. When women speak from their experience, they lose anxiety about being "wrong." This has the ancillary effect of building the academic competitive skills of discussion, verbalizing ideas, logical argumentation, and assertive behavior.

Opening Up Alternatives

A major strategy as women move from centering to focusing outward is the *opening up* of alternatives and options through which they continue to build competencies, develop confidence, and get in touch with what is right for them. They become aware of these options through the role models around them, through discussions and assignments in courses, and through learning about jobs and activities to which they might relate in the community. Of great help are courses in vocational/occupational guidance, career planning, and resume preparation. Vocational, aptitude, and interest tests are now utilized with less risk that they will be misinterpreted.

In sorting through these options the process of *guiding* plays a role, although it does not take the form of advice on solutions. The emphasis is on helping a woman assume responsibility for herself by working through a problem with support and feedback. As one teacher indicated: "I don't know if my way is better. Does yours work? If so, then it's *fine*." Formal diagnostic counseling is often available, if not built into the program, and is generally supplemented by peer counseling, rap groups, clubs for returning women, discussion centers, and the genuine interest of staff and fellow students who have become friends.

As women examine new options, they often reach out to include more in their schedules than they can reasonably handle. For a while this may

emerge as an either/or conflict between their traditional roles and new roles requiring different behavior and allocation of time. The conflict can be eased by the family's willingness to support the woman's change or compounded by pressure on her to drop out. With the conflict brought out into the open, women exchange ways of setting priorities, reassigning family responsibilities, and scheduling study time on and off campus. The emphasis is on doing both rather than foregoing one or the other, but in setting reasonable limits: "You learn to live with what you can."

Often, women find they can handle much more than they thought and, at least for a while, add to their lives many enjoyable opportunities previously foregone. Some counselors refer to this as the "merry-go-round" stage, a heady round of continual excitement that gradually shifts into more selective choices in tune with the centered self.

Taking Risks

The getting-in-touch strategies continue throughout the program at progressively deeper levels of self-insight. As women find their center, they also focus outward toward choosing the paths that will refine and extend these gains. Centering and focusing overlap. The next phase increases focusing abilities by preserving self-confidence as women test out their skills in the wider world of options. Testing these skills involves taking greater risks.

The moment of risk taking varies with individual women and with programs. Structured programs afford more time for cushioning women against taking too many risks early in the program, while simultaneously weaning them away from overreliance on others. When programs are confined either to one course or to minimal amounts of counseling, staff do their best to facilitate risk taking with fewer supports, hoping that they, others on the staff, or the woman's friends and family can step in if needed. Assertive behavior is actively fostered, at times through formal courses in assertiveness training, risk taking, and behavior modification.

Women test out their confidence, new plans, and competencies in both their academic and personal lives. Not all of them survive this testing unscathed. Some drop out of programs because they receive too much pressure from husbands or children or perceive themselves as inadequate to the task. Others may stay in the program but are forced to deal with unhappy personal lives or major changes in friends and life-styles. Many women find that after a period of some difficulty, their families adjust to allow for changes.

Academic programs demand special kinds of risks, even though their impact may be minimized: the first exams, the early term papers, the first assignments. Women feel they are putting themselves on the line. Often instructors clearly spell out assignments and material expected for exams, explain how to write a term paper and share sample papers, or offer or recommend remedial work. Some women elect to minimize their risks in

advance by taking programmed courses, which may be available at campus learning resource centers for study skills and remedial work. At times, programs emphasize remedial work from the beginning in core courses, when women have not completed high school or had difficulties with subjects such as English or math. Tutors hold pretest sessions, and group study is encouraged.

Taking Stock

Even with this cushioning approach, women do not always succeed as they would like to. Feedback is the occasion for taking stock. It may take the form of grades: the comments of peers, staff, or family; or a troublesome situation handled differently than before. At this point, women need assistance to utilize new knowledge of themselves constructively in personal assessment and further development.

This is easier in academic matters than in personal situations. Unfortunately, needed counseling services are seldom available immediately, except perhaps from peer counselors. While counseling is essential in re-entry programs, most of them must rely on a few counselors in the program or on shared time from the college; as a result, work loads and student–counselor ratios tend to be unrealistic. Unless personal counseling is built into the program, women must take it on themselves to request it. They may not do this at all or only toward the end of their participation in the program. Academic feedback patterns are more predictable. Instructors stand ready to consult with women; tutors and fellow students form additional study groups; study aids and remedial work are recommended.

Counselors, when available, assist in the "reframing" of goals for women whose aims are unrealistic or who have received too little feedback to judge what is possible. However, in academic programs, there is usually no urgent need for this kind of guidance. The motivation and actual achievement of re-entry women are high compared with other students. These women enthusiastically want to succeed.

Programs seeking to integrate women into the college mainstream generally do so within a year, although the time varies with program ideology and the characteristics of learners. Frequently, women stay in the program longer, particularly if they need a great deal of remedial work. At one school, women are allowed to repeat courses that they have failed several times. In these programs, confidence is reinforced as women learn to revise their plans regularly on the basis of feedback and increasing self-knowledge. With each success, they rely less and less on counseling and support services and more and more on themselves. In this way, self-confidence and self-insights feed on their own consequences.

This kind of reinforcement is seldom available without follow-up, which is rare in nonacademic programs. Even in academic programs, which have more time, resources, and sustained interest to check up on dropouts, follow-up cannot be maintained regularly after a woman's participation is

ended. At best, a few colleges have sent out questionnaires and held an annual get-together; they also welcome back past participants to visit staff and activities or to use the drop-in center. Nonacademic programs use these strategies, too, but their unstructured nature precludes any systematic assistance for solidifying women's gains.

Beyond the Program

Of course, the final test of gains is the world beyond participation in the program. Teachers and counselors emphasize the planning of individual goals for the period ahead. Typically, tentative choices are made from the widened personal, academic, and occupational options women have been exposed to.

Programs with an academic orientation often limit their immediate objectives to further study at the community college level. However, while continued course work may be the rule, it is not a necessity. Community colleges offer a mix of transfer and terminal programs. Frequently, women leave by choice or necessity before receiving an Associate of Arts degree or certificate, going on to jobs they can now attain or to other life choices.

Some programs maintain extensive community connections that provide assistance in finding jobs, or they refer women to centers maintained by community colleges. A few community colleges also have connections with four-year colleges, some of which helped to set up the programs originally. Even without formal relationships, programs refer women to contacts in these colleges.

The key to this phase is *grounding*, helping women to assess their opportunities in the light of hard realities and to plan accordingly. It is unfortunately true that their job possibilities are often limited, given older age levels, meager work backgrounds, and a shrinking job market. Teachers express sympathetic concern for the suburban housewife seeking employment after a career of child rearing: "What's a woman to do who is in her 40s, who has no skills? How is she going to get a job when there are all these skilled people around who can't get jobs?" The prospects for minority women are especially discouraging, except where federal law and welfare regulations provide assistance in finding employment.

One minority teacher commented that the breakthrough for women, as for ethnic and racial minorities, has come at a time when the state of the economy is restricting options. Radical women's groups see this as one of the main features of an unfair social system and argue that moderate re-entry program should, therefore, change their tactics and objectives.

Nevertheless, self-confidence, once acquired, becomes incorporated into one's sense of self. It may be reinforced by receiving a degree or certificate from a community college. Despite limited job options, many women value these credentials as proof of their ability to make it in a new world, which they may have feared.

4. Transition Support

Re-entering women are breaking away from traditional norms and role assignments. Many experience a rewarding sense of self-fulfillment that reinforces their motivation for the break. Especially when they are able to stay in a program long enough, they become stimulated and excited by the new vistas opening up to them. Traditional roles, however, have their own gratifications, which make it easy for women to drop out of the academic and professional race. Women have been rewarded for not going to school and men for continuing. Before the rewards of returning to college outweigh the strains of change, women need additional academic, emotional, and personal support to sustain their efforts.

Support Structure

To deal with this problem, re-entry programs construct supplementary support structures. In a sense, what happens is that the traditional college program—already more flexible because of the nature of the community college—is reprogrammed along with the women in order to accommodate their specific needs. Reprogramming can involve the following: readjusted or "refloored" requirements, classes offered in integrated blocks, child care facilities, a women's center, referrals and peer counseling, teacher selection practices, rap groups, and significant modifications of the curriculum.

Reflooring Requirements. Community colleges do not have extensive entrance requirements; they generally extend an open door to all who wish to enter, either full- or part-time. Nevertheless, even the minimal requirements of registration and class choices can be an obstacle especially for full-time students, since fears can distort reality. Hence, an important modification is frequently some kind of *reflooring* of these requirements—that is, a change in the requirements making women eligible for entrance.

The program might have a special group arrangement with the office of admissions and registration. In other instances, programs initially enroll women on a part-time basis, thus avoiding the requirements set for full-time students. Entrance tests are seldom called for. Most often, the re-entry woman simply sees the program personnel, who provide necessary

forms, answer questions, and often furnish initial guidance or counseling. Placement tests are not common, although they may be given along with some screening.

Reflooring is later carried into class requirements. Written assignments may center on personal experiences as much as on academic topics; grading may be dropped entirely or be less stringent at the start, sometimes with the caution that standards will be raised; sample tests may be given. English composition classes often assist women to write social science term papers. In one case, a professor allows students who become anxious during exams to stop in the middle and continue the next day.

Blocking Classes. The most fully developed support feature of most California programs is the blocking of classes, with participation recommended only to re-entry women. In its simplest form, this means one or two core courses that a cohort takes in common; they might be offered during the day or evening. In its more fully developed form, blocking involves a set of courses that are offered back-to-back on certain days of the week. For example, women choose to come on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or Tuesday and Thursday, and are placed in a block accordingly. Courses are held from morning to early afternoon to coincide with the hours children are in school.

In the California experience, blocking builds up a buddy system among members of a cohort. It provides a safe, familiar atmosphere of understanding and acceptance. It eliminates anxieties over courses to be selected and provides a common starting point for all women.

Child Care. The development of a child care center is a crucial aspect of the college support system. Many re-entry women have small children and could not return to school without this service. Initiating special child care facilities has been a difficult undertaking on most campuses and remains only a goal on others. Sometimes, programs are able to draw on a general campus facility, but this is likely to be overcrowded. At times, the best they can do is to coordinate with community agencies.

Funding for child care centers sometimes comes from outside the college. The battle for the initiation or retention of these facilities can be stormy, involving college administrators, boards of trustees, and community residents, as well as students and program personnel. Opponents argue that tax dollars should not be used for this "personal" or "family" responsibility. Advocates point to the number of other tax-supported programs, such as college sports, that are equally nonacademic and personal, to the benefit for children as well as mothers, and to women's need for reeducation in order to get better jobs to support themselves and their children.

Child care centers, if they exist, are usually "more than a baby-sitting service." In many cases a full educational program has evolved around them, including parent education classes with children in attendance and rotated parent responsibilities. Not only does this free women for school

activities, it also does away with the worry of finding a responsible child-care person and allows the parent access to the child during the day.

Women's Centers. The existence of a women's center in a specific physical location is not a regular feature of re-entry programs. Sometimes, space may have been promised by the college but not yet allocated. Sometimes a center is in operation but is utilized chiefly by other programs for matriculated women, such as women's studies programs. When a center is present, it seems to unify participants and to promote the informal support that is often an essential ingredient of success. It serves as a drop-in counseling center, a social hub, a study room, a locus of group identity, often a library or information referral center, and sometimes provides office space for the staff of women's programs or women's groups.

With or without a women's center, however, some grouping of administrators, teachers, counselors, paid student aides, or student volunteers usually run a referral service, which functions as a channel to general campus and community resources—medical facilities, child care, transportation, financial aid, learning centers, study skills courses, tutoring, counseling, jobs. Almost always a major portion of someone's time is spent in assisting women to meet day-to-day crises. In some programs, especially the nonacademic ones, the referral service is the major component of the program. In other programs, certain of these functions are separated from the referral service and provided separately. For example, a number of academic programs provide for tutoring; most programs provide peer or professional counseling. However, few programs have the resources or desire to duplicate services available elsewhere on the campus.

Sometimes the people who staff the center are trained peer counselors, working to gain academic credit. On other campuses, they are volunteers or are paid through work–study funds, although they may or may not have received special training for the task. Often those functioning in this capacity and in other paraprofessional roles are themselves former re-entry students, who are personally familiar with the problems they encounter. These people contribute to the already high level of enthusiasm and dedication in the program, because they are excited about sharing the benefits they have gained.

Sympathetic Staff. The selection of teachers and other personnel who are sympathetic to re-entry women is crucial. The people staffing successful programs are personally committed, dedicated, and interested. They frequently work longer hours than they are paid for and go out of their way to make sure that a student feels welcome. By individualizing each woman's relationship to the program, they give it a personal quality that counteracts its bureaucratic aspects. Personalizing takes on different dimensions, depending on the size of the campus and the personalities involved. Some women need considerable support and welcome an inti-

mate environment; others require little "sistering" before they move off on their own.

At times, former students are hired as teachers. Occasionally you will find men teaching and counseling in the programs, although most staff members are women who often have returned to college on their own without the benefit of special programs. While women faculty are generally supportive, it is not uncommon to encounter some who feel that "if I did it on my own, so can they." Re-entry programs need teachers committed to their objectives and sympathetic to their students; however, control over the selection process varies in different colleges.

Subject Matter. The fact that re-entry courses are highly selective in content and frequently innovative usually dictates the kind of teacher chosen. It has often been an uphill climb to include courses taught primarily for or about women even in community colleges, and they are generally more responsive to the world outside academia and more flexible than universities. Furthermore, even after becoming institutionalized, programs have drawn new criticism for excluding men and being separatist in nature.

Subject matter, both traditional and nontraditional, is all taught from the woman's perspective. Nontraditional content generally relates to jobs and new life-styles and to the psychological and social processes involved in changing one's life. Traditional subject matter, such as family education, is given a new focus. The stress is on self-examination, departure from past norms, and the recognition of expanding options.

The degree to which reprogramming is accomplished depends on the philosophy of the program, the security that it enjoys, as well as on other organizational factors. We consider these issues in the following sections on program dynamics.

II. PROGRAM DYNAMICS

1. Program Types

Re-entry programs can be classified into four types, with distinctive objectives, curricula, methods, and student populations.

Community-oriented programs are designed primarily for women who are not affiliated with the college in any way. The principal goal is to provide assistance and guidance to women making changes in their lives. Many who participate already have college degrees. They come to the program because they are looking for something to do with their lives or because they are going through a time of personal turmoil or crisis. These programs do not usually offer regular college courses. They normally consist of short workshops extending from six to eight weeks and one-day or weekend-long workshops or lectures. They also offer counseling, testing, and other support services.

Two of the program types are college oriented, designed to recruit and/or to integrate women into the regular college curriculum. Their objective is to help re-entry women adjust to college and to foster the self-confidence needed to perform effectively in student roles. One is the *academic college-oriented program*, which offers regular credit courses. The women are admitted to the college through the program and are often assisted in the processes of admission and registration. In many programs of this kind, students go through a semester together as a cohort group, taking a required sequence of courses. The blocked curriculum is scheduled on days and at times most convenient for the women participating.

Nonacademic college-oriented programs are designed for two special populations. Some are geared to the needs of women already registered in the college through established procedures who have not succeeded in formulating their academic or occupational objectives. Many of these women realize that they need help in finding personal direction in their lives before continuing their education. Such programs are not common in community colleges, although they appear frequently among university re-entry programs.

The other special population served by nonacademic college-oriented programs are women interested in becoming matriculated students. For example, in New York City a federally funded preadmission counseling

program was conducted on four community college campuses of the City University in 1975 and 1976 to recruit women for regular college work and help them through registration procedures. The program involved a series of workshops in self-awareness, career exploration, and college information, as well as counseling and testing. Over 72 percent of the 189 women completing the program applied to college, whereas only 18 percent of the women had previously applied for admission to any college. Program planners saw role modeling and group support as pivotal to the program's success.[7]

Finally, there are a few *comprehensive programs* concerned with both the community-oriented and college-oriented needs of women. One college in Illinois conducts a bifurcated program consisting of two semiautonomous components; one offers a blocked curriculum, the other stresses counseling and direction-finding courses. Coordinators in each component report to different administrative units within the college. A similar arrangement was found at a campus in the San Francisco Bay area. Another program in Northern California offers a sequence of courses branching into three areas of development: further study, community service, and job training.

Academic College-oriented Programs

De Anza College in Cupertino, California, has developed the prototype of the academic college-oriented program. Founded with federal funds through the initiative of a few dedicated women not affiliated with the school, it has concentrated on the needs of working-class minority group members. The program espouses the ideology of the "extended family," with staff and students sharing a common concern about the personal lives of participants throughout the program. After the first year of following a blocked curriculum, a wider range of elective choice is offered. The primary goal of most women is to complete the degree at De Anza, and although there is a good deal of attention given to career planning, the program does not offer vocational education.

Laney College in Oakland, California, has an urban re-entry program primarily serving the black community. It is patterned after the De Anza model. Job preparation and vocational training are emphasized, although college preparation is also available. A similar program for men was established at the school recently.

A unique program has been sponsored and initiated by the National Council of Neighborhood Women (NCNW) at LaGuardia College in New York City. The NCNW planned the program, utilizing resources of the college to assist it in implementation. Women remain together in their own sequence of courses, with the NCNW's community activist philosophy as a guiding program ideology.

These particular academic college-oriented programs all supplement more traditional courses with opportunities to engage in personal direction finding, self-examination and life planning either through credit courses

under the heading of guidance or sociology or through informal rap groups. Other programs of this type tend to stay closer to standard academic subjects, some emphasizing women's issues. One program was conceived as essentially a component of a women's studies curriculum on the assumption that the best role models for adult women are to be found through the study of history; however, this approach is unusual.

The format of cohort groups moving through a blocked curriculum is most common in California but has also developed in at least two other states. Often academic college-oriented programs follow up on an initial semester or year of blocked curricula with elective courses. Others do not block the curricula but offer special elective courses for women, sometimes in a recommended sequence. Blocked curricula appear to be especially valuable for working-class women and have obvious advantages for many others as well.

Community-oriented Programs

Community-oriented programs are much more likely than college-oriented programs to serve middle-class women. Frequently, participation in them demands less of a time commitment than academic programs require. Often the community-oriented programs involve taking one or two courses of four to ten weeks and then moving on to something else. Emphasis is on supportive exploration rather than meeting short-term or intermediate academic goals.

An interesting program was initiated in 1974 with a Title I (Higher Education Act) grant by Whatcom Community College in the state of Washington. The college has no campus and uses rented buildings for classrooms and library. It operates three outreach centers in different locations in the country; textbooks are sold via a bookmobile. The nondegree women's program currently funded by the college has recently been supplemented by a similar program for men.

Community-oriented programs are usually located in the community services or continuing education unit within the college. Most have been started through the initiative of the head of this division. The programs are devoted to direction finding, self-exploration, fostering self-confidence, career planning, and such personal growth areas as assertiveness training, transactional analysis, and decision making. There is never a standard curriculum, and academic courses are usually recommended only upon request. Programs include courses of a direction-finding type, courses in women's studies, enrichment/recreational courses, and possibly remedial or refresher courses. Only infrequently are vocational subjects included. No specific courses are required, although women are encouraged to take a direction-finding course or two at the beginning. While academic programs offer courses for credit, the practice in community-oriented programs varies. Credit may be given as a political statement, indicating that women

should not waste their time taking noncredit courses if they do not have a degree; usually one point of credit is awarded per course.

Peer and professional counseling is a central component of community-oriented programs, and there is emphasis on rap groups and other forms of mutual self-help. Although consciousness raising is seldom referred to because of a stigma associated with militant feminism, this function dominates community-oriented programs and permeates most college-oriented programs as well. Program directors confess that it is a hidden agenda, but they often attach different meanings to the term.

Community-oriented programs are not necessarily trying to bridge the gap between community and college life; they are seeking to help women move to wherever they choose—to college, a training program, a job, or to a more rewarding life in the community or at home. Most of them rarely deal with matriculated students, although directors sometimes consider this a shortcoming. Community-oriented programs tend to emphasize shorter term goals than do academic programs, which place more emphasis on career planning and jobs than on personal self-development.

In Pennsylvania a consortium encourages programs to act in an advocacy role for women on campus and engages in recruitment. Campus coordinators attempt to sensitize administrators and faculty members to the special needs of returning women. Provision of specialized courses, counseling services, or the group organization of women students is seen as secondary to the advocacy, staff awareness, and recruiting functions.

Geographic proximity to other colleges often influences the emphasis of a program. Those in the same area maintain contact, share ideas and, in some cases, even program resources. In several states consortia or professional associations of the directors and staff of women's programs have come into being. Similar re-entry programs tend to result from these professional involvements.

Types of Re-entry Courses

We have identified several different types of courses that may be found in women's re-entry programs:

1. *Personal direction-finding courses* dealing with self-exploration, life planning, decision making, transactional analysis, guidance
2. *Social science and humanities courses* concerned with women, such as the Sociology of Women, Psychology of Women, Women and Literature, Women in the Community
3. *"How to" courses* on subjects such as financial management, consumer education, resume writing, auto repair
4. *Enrichment–recreation courses* treating subjects like yoga, crafts, etc.
5. *Health and sexuality courses*, such as Female Sexuality and Family Health and Nutrition

6. *Remedial or refresher courses* in fundamental math, English composition, preparation for the Graduate Record Examination
7. *Academic courses* in subjects like history, mathematics, computer science, biology
8. *Occupational or vocational courses*, providing instruction in fields like nursing, community work, medical specialties, paraprofessional work.

Only academic college-oriented programs and comprehensive programs offer regular college courses. All program types may include counseling, testing, a women's center, a child care center, a resource library, job placement or referral, as well as public events and short workshops. Among 279 respondents in our survey of re-entry programs,* 23 percent placed major emphasis on public events and noncredit courses. However, only 19 percent placed *no* emphasis on credit courses, and 13 percent placed *no* emphasis on noncredit courses. Most re-entry programs use both noncredit and credit courses in varying combinations.

* As explained in the Appendix, 314 two-year colleges indicated that they sponsored a re-entry program for women. The 279 institutions referred to here include all those among the 314 that responded to the specific question under discussion. The fact that all respondents sponsoring re-entry programs failed to answer all questions put to them accounts for similar discrepancies in the number of survey respondents cited below.

2. Setting Goals

Programs describe their goals ambiguously; explicit statements prescribing what a woman should have achieved as a result of her participation are conspicuous by their absence. However, all of the programs are clearly aware that they exist to provide specialized support for women who are effecting a transition in their lives. Since the women are at different phases in this transitional process, their needs vary. Different learning tasks confront them, and different educational responses to facilitate such learning are more or less appropriate. Few re-entry programs can provide all of the educational services required for everyone in each phase of development. Most nonacademic programs are geared toward providing support for the phases that lead to planning a specific course of action. Some academic programs go all the way in attempting to assist women to move ahead throughout the whole process.

Goals of Re-entry Programs

The goals of women's re-entry programs are implicit in the creation of an educational support system to facilitate this transitional process of adult development. While specifics are seldom spelled out formally, directors are usually firm in their own purpose and articulate in explaining what is involved in both the developmental process and the goal of providing an educational program to support it. The central goal of women's re-entry programs, as we have noted in earlier sections, is *perspective transformation*—helping women to see themselves and their relationships in new ways, which require taking responsibility for their lives, examining their options, and formulating new life plans. It is a unique mission in higher education.

A more traditional educational goal may be also involved—helping students prepare to implement their plans insofar as college resources will permit. While student-oriented academic re-entry programs may set the degree as a goal, community-oriented programs avoid specifying objectives other than a sense of development and a feeling of accomplishment. Indeed, both types of programs see their primary purpose as providing support and a social climate in which women can feel free to explore

themselves and their world with a minimum of threat. Community-oriented programs, originally designed for middle-class women, have retained their basic format when dealing with women from the working-class. This has sometimes proved dysfunctional, and such programs tend to flounder and become attenuated.

College goals play a small role in the formulation of program objectives, except in those institutions where there is a specific policy against sponsoring programs for a particular segment of the population such as women. This constraint often produces some sharp disagreements and can result in lack of college support for a program. For many programs the goal is enrollment of able students in the regular college curriculum. Program goals change as the result of changes in staff, clientele, administrators, boards of trustees, funding, and community conditions. These goals reflect the variety of interest groups served. Negotiating them is a political process, particularly since the programs in general are new and represent a departure from traditional roles. Tactics range from confrontation to quietly "easing in" with few demands and low visibility.

Few programs actually survey client needs before setting up operations, but almost all hold workshops or other public events like open houses to gauge the demand for women's programs, and most conduct informal polls of the college and community groups they hope to serve. Re-entry programs exist for women who are uncertain of their plans or know what they think they want to do but lack the confidence or academic skills to make it as a regularly matriculated student or as a newcomer in the job market.

Most programs are the result of the women's movement but are careful not to become identified with feminist goals for fear of threatening re-entry women and college decision-makers. Program staff suggest that women in their programs are proud of their traditional roles as housewives and mothers and feel threatened by their concept of "women's lib" which, as they understand it, deprecates these roles. Nevertheless, as we have suggested before, the concerns of the women's movement are significant in the ideologies of directors, instructors, and counselors. Especially salient are the values that stress personal autonomy and responsibility, and equality in access to jobs and compensation for work performed.

Goals of Re-entry Women

The goals set by the women, themselves, are a function of the phase of perspective transformation and decision making they have reached. Four phases can be identified: (1) The direction-finding phase, calling for self-exploration, role awareness, exploring options, and planning; (2) a collateral and overlapping phase, involving the development of self-confidence, human relations skills, and academic competencies; (3) an initial phase, entailing preparation for an occupation or new life-style often through an educational or training program; (4) the final phase, calling for entry or

re-entry into the job market or a change in life-style, which may require referral, placement, and follow-up for reinforcement.

Women attend the nonacademic direction-finding courses because they want to know themselves and their options better. They may have a vague idea of what they want to do—or do not want to do—with their lives, may want to explore one possibility further or may not have a priority for exploration. On the other hand, they may have no idea at all of what they want to do with their futures; their occupational, educational, or personal needs may have not crystallized as yet. They may feel ambivalent about anything requiring a new commitment and be venturing on a wholly tentative exploration.

While women in the academic programs may also be uncertain about their eventual goals, they have made some kind of a commitment to a degree program. Even this choice may be simply a function of what kind of re-entry program happens to be located conveniently for them. If an academic or a nonacademic program is the only one available within comfortable traveling distance or scheduled at times that make attendance feasible, interested women will choose it. A recurrent comment by women in all types of programs was that the course was good but "not for me." This is another way of saying the course addressed a developmental phase different than the one in which the woman found herself.

The difficulty women experience in setting goals when first entering a program is endemic. One overhears the bemused observation: "My kids complain that they don't know what they want to do, and I tell them I don't either." Such confusion is to be expected. One advisor shrewdly sums up this orientation: "If the majority of you have been housewives, you've lived in isolation. Starting college will take time to work out, so just do that, and don't worry right away about what kind of job to do." When structured programs allow women to continually reframe goals, personal development is greatly enhanced. Many re-entry women change goals as often as they encounter new experiences within and outside the program.

Jobs are often a major consideration, especially for those who must support themselves and possibly their children or who are becoming aware of the declining stability of marriage. However, although jobs are always seen as important, they are generally not assigned the highest priority by middle-class women. Working-class women, on the other hand, often have more interest in job-related educational experiences than in self-exploration.

For low-income women part-time jobs provided by student employment or the Comprehensive Employment Training Act, which has been used to support women participating in re-entry programs, may be more important than any educational goals. One administrator comments: "The women often have a fifth-grade education. One of the hardest things was to help them to think of themselves as college students and professionals. They needed the money." In some programs women on welfare receive special

consideration, and collecting welfare checks with all of the bureaucratic red tape involved complicates the program's operation.

Women with higher and more stable incomes have more choice in job options and in deciding whether or not and when to work. Middle-class women often want only part-time employment for particular kinds of jobs. One suburban college is working toward establishing an arts and crafts cooperative in which women can work, teach part-time, and market their goods. The same program emphasizes preparation for middle-level management jobs and provides bus tours to potential industrial employers.

A variety of other program goals address differing emphases: vocational or professional training, health or physical fitness, parenting, consumer economics, ethnic or working-class identification, or remedial or refresher work. Regardless of the program's emphasis, some women participate simply for the satisfaction of knowing that they *can* earn a degree.

3. Relations within the College

Knowing the extent of a program's integration into the college is important information for understanding its problems. The quality and frequency of the program's interaction with other academic departments and administrative units on campus and the amount of understanding and support it receives from administrative policy-makers and faculty are all indicative of its organizational position.

Among 288 community colleges of the 314 in our national survey with women's re-entry programs, 45 percent of the programs were sponsored by community services or continuing education divisions, 17 percent by a student affairs or counseling unit, 9 percent by an academic department or dean's office, less than 7 percent by a women's center, and 19 percent by some combination of these units.

College-oriented Programs

Academic college-oriented programs maintain closer ties with the departments upon which they depend and with other parts of the college than do nonacademic programs. At some colleges, the community services/continuing education unit performs only an administrative function, facilitating liaison between the program director and the academic departments involved. Programs housed in regular academic units are usually placed in them because their core courses are offered by that particular division. These programs operate much the same as those located in community services or continuing education units. A few academic programs find themselves in a student affairs office because the initiator of the program was a part of that office. In effect, it seems to make little difference where academic programs are located administratively; they operate in much the same way, all working closely with faculty and other departments.

Academic departments often play a key role in staffing and curriculum development. The director relies on her powers of persuasion and on good personal relationships with core faculty members and department heads to make her program function well. Innovations such as blocked curricula, the selection of teachers sympathetic to the program, and emphasis on wo-

men's issues in course content have been won at the cost of hard negotiation, persuasion, and pressure, and, in some cases, through confrontation and demonstration. Generally, programs with stronger links to academic departments have better chances for survival.

Community-oriented Programs

Although the community-oriented programs may be highly institutionalized for relatively new programs, by and large they are less integrated than the academic ones. As indicated earlier, they have followed a different developmental pattern, beginning in urban areas in the mid-sixties to accommodate middle-class women and then in the seventies moving into the suburbs, where their clientele lived. The most successful of them were initiated by the heads of community services/continuing education units, most commonly with college resources and also with extramural grants. Those initiated with outside grants have been established within the last two or three years and have experienced special problems of integration.

Within recent years, community-oriented programs designed primarily to serve working-class women have begun to develop, usually with funds from an outside grant. These nonacademic programs are generally weak and have not yet succeeded in becoming institutionalized. Even with sympathetic interest by the college, the likelihood of securing college financial help is not great in a period of general retrenchment and enforced enrollment ceilings. In addition, a number of the better established urban middle-class programs have begun to recruit minority and working-class women actively. There are two reasons for this. One is an increased awareness and commitment to people in the immediate area of the college. It has become increasingly unacceptable to ignore the residents of these areas and to import white middle-class students from the suburbs. The other is that the programs are having difficulty attracting women to their downtown locations. Programs have also established outreach or satellite locations to expand the population they serve and thus justify their continued utility to the college. However, the changing composition of the student body has not changed the basic thrust of the community-oriented programs.

Funding

Integration is in large part a function of funding. Academic college-oriented programs generally have their own budgets. Most do not generate revenue, except indirectly in states that have average daily attendance formulas for college funding. Instructors in academic programs are generally regular college faculty, whose re-entry assignment is part of their regular teaching load. The initiators of these programs were often wary of

applying for outside funds for fear of having to close when the grants ran out and because of the conviction that the college should make a commitment to the program from the beginning.

The price paid for the security of financial integration with the college is limited flexibility. Some academic programs have dealt with the constraint of limited flexibility by securing grants to supplement the college's continuing support. Others rely heavily on community contacts for necessary resources and the flexibility to deal with the special needs of re-entry women. These variations in funding are less common among nonacademic programs, which tend to find support either exclusively from the outside or solely from the college.

Community-oriented programs, particularly those administered through community services/continuing education units, rely upon fees to cover their costs. Most are partially subsidized by the college, which usually provides the salary of the director or coordinator of the program and other indirect costs; the programs are expected to be self-supporting otherwise. The amount of support from college revenues varies among the programs studied from a high of $80,000 in one program to a more typical $6,000–$15,000. Because community services/continuing education programs tend to be peripheral in their relationships to the rest of their colleges, these re-entry programs may be accepted as a valuable part of the college but often remain isolated on a day-to-day basis from the rest of the campus community. However, the community-oriented programs enjoy a greater degree of autonomy than academic programs, partly as a consequence of their greater financial independence.

The greater the degree of program integration, the less immediate is the director's control over her program. In academic programs, which often use or give first choice to regular college faculty, the academic departments approve faculty selection, although the director usually has some influence in choosing instructors. In community-oriented programs, especially those that offer no credit courses, staff can be selected by the director on the basis of sensitivity to the needs of re-entry women, the ability to attract and retain students, and other criteria of special relevance to the programs. College faculty are occasionally used but are not necessarily given first preference.

Many programs remain marginal, especially community-oriented programs predominantly serving working-class women. Often programs that come into existence with the support of grants from external sources terminate when the grant ends. Their survival depends upon building support from within the college. The interest of the president can be of crucial importance; often his wife has been a staunch program ally. Generally the "grafting on" of an externally funded program initiated from outside the college or by interested persons within the college who lack influence means the program will be short-lived.

The heart of the integration effort is the status granted the program's director. If this position is on a hard money budget line or is eligible for academic tenure, the first crucial battle is won. Although academic programs have been able to win this measure of integration for the most part, the community-oriented and nonacademic programs have seldom succeeded. Directors in these programs work on annual contracts, many on released time or on a part-time basis.

Community Involvement

Community involvement is another variable of consequence in assessing re-entry programs. There is considerable variation in the extent to which programs rely on community groups or agencies for such functions as funding, recruitment, placement, supporting services, cosponsorship, and legitimization.

Programs for working-class women have specialized needs in the community. Participants more often require welfare, employment, health, and social services, which the college cannot itself provide; therefore, these programs tend to build strong community links. Community-oriented programs, originally created for middle-class women but more recently extended to working-class women, have seldom succeeded in mobilizing their community contacts to provide the specialized and often urgently needed support services required by the newer student population. This may be a major factor in their weakness.

In general, however, community-oriented programs have developed strong community ties; for several this has proved to be their real strength. The community-oriented program must keep close to its constituency and gear offerings to the women's needs and interests or it will fail to maintain the minimum enrollments upon which its classes depend. College-oriented programs may be active in the community too but are less at the mercy of an enrollment economy. They frequently offer courses included in the regular academic curriculum, especially when they are appealing primarily to middle-class students.

Most community-oriented programs have some kind of an advisory board, which includes community leaders. One program had an Employment Advisory Committee. There seems to be a clear correlation between the vigor and stability of the programs and the existence of an active advisory board. Among campus-oriented programs, however, active community advisory boards or committees are the exception; some academic program advisory boards are composed of campus representatives.

Many directors and key staff spend a good deal of time speaking with community groups, maintaining contact with opinion leaders, and publicizing their programs. Cosponsorship of classes influences the nature of course offerings; linkages with businesses are often reflected in an emphasis on job preparation; ties to community organizations in an emphasis on civic problems.

Recruitment

Recruitment can be crucial to re-entry programs. Some women are actively seeking the opportunities these programs afford. Many others are at an earlier point in the process of perspective transformation. The beginning of this process may be only a sense of ennui, a lack of fulfillment, or a mounting realization that families will require less attention as children get older. At this point women may find themselves taking more interest in the lives of friends who have combined their homemaker role with continuing education or jobs. "Reaching" women is in large part a function of their receptivity or readiness—where they are in the developmental process.

Recruitment budgets are usually very limited unless programs are operating with funds from grants. If a program has been in existence for a few years, word-of-mouth methods may suffice. Often women are actively recruited through public events, which may vary in nature from informal social programs to lecture series or short workshops. Of the 267 programs responding on this question, nearly 95 percent reported sponsoring such events, and 56 percent ranked them first or second in emphasis over both counseling and course work.

I have already referred to the ambitious recruitment effort of the City University of New York (CUNY), which conducted a preadmission counseling program on four of its community college campuses under a Vocational Education Act grant. Nearly half of the 672 women who attended the orientation conferences on these campuses also attended the first of three follow-up workshops. Half of those initially recruited responded to newspaper announcements, 16 percent to promotional effort through parent associations, and 16 percent responded to word-of-mouth information.[8]

The CUNY experience suggests the value of (1) establishing an effective network of key persons with access to the appropriate target population; (2) personalizing and following up with radio or TV staffs to assure that press releases are received and used; (3) condensing press materials to ensure their use without editing by media staffs; (4) retrospective analysis to ascertain which recruitment techniques worked best in different communities.

In addition to the use of public events, women are actively recruited by setting up information tables in shopping malls and grocery stores, by referrals from other educational or social agencies, and by attracting those already on campus, enrolled either in regular academic programs or in noncredit or nondegree courses or workshops. Programs depend upon their relationships with other agencies and on their advisory board to make the program known within the community. The program director generally keeps a busy speaking schedule with emphasis on women's clubs and organizations. One program has done very well using a public relations class to write articles published locally that describe the program and the women in it.

Grant funds are more likely to be used for recruiting working-class women who are harder to involve, especially in programs and colleges associated with middle-class populations. Carol Eliason of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges has identified the following federal funding sources for colleges providing educational services for adult women: Educational Amendments of 1976, Vocational Education Act of 1976 (Titles I, VI and others), Comprehensive Education and Training Act of 1974 (Titles I, III, VI, VIII), Revenue Sharing Act, Community Development Act of 1974, Mental Health/Mental Retardation Funds, Social Security Act (Title XX), Small Business Administration, Women's Educational Equity Act, Bilingual Education Program, Career Education Program, and the Right to Read Program.[9]

4. Program Directors and Staff

The director plays the most influential role in the re-entry program, as in most innovative adult education programs. Her style and philosophy influence every one of its facets. It will be she, sometimes together with an influential founder of the program, who determines whether it is oriented toward a specific social-class population or ethnic group, takes an extended family approach, embraces feminist concepts, emphasizes community activism, or identifies with the labor movement. In some cases the founders—perhaps a group of feminist instructors at the college—have turned the program over to an administrator for whom they remain an important reference group. Few directors identify themselves as feminists. Those who do often direct working-class programs, and their programs are likely to emphasize consciousness raising and women's issues.

In campus-oriented programs, directors tend to have a graduate degree or to be working toward one. In working-class programs, community experience may be accepted as a substitute for a degree; directors are often themselves former re-entry students, instructors, or counselors. Many have been active as volunteers in civic and community organizations, and few have had previous administrative or program development experience. Directors strongly identify with their programs. Most see their future careers as continuations of their present professional involvement in their programs; none interviewed expressed a desire to change their occupation, although a few indicated interest in a possible second career sometime in the future.

Although directors are always pivotal to their programs, they are especially so in some of the marginal community-oriented programs that they, themselves, have instituted, using limited part-time staff only as meager resources permit. In the more successful programs, directors were often among the original organizers. Over 56 percent of the 314 re-entry programs in our survey have directors, and only 55 of them—77.5 percent of all directors—serve on a full-time basis.

Re-entry Instructors

Instructors are selected on the basis of their expertise, their sensitivity to the needs of returning women, and their ability to fill and retain a class.

Academic qualifications are not usually an issue. In community-oriented programs college faculty members are not commonly given first choice to teach in the program; in some colleges union contracts preclude their doing so. When they are used, they volunteer to participate because they are in sympathy with the program. Such participation almost never has a bearing on promotions, tenure, or other conventional academic rewards. College instructors are paid at the same rate as instructors brought in from the community.

However, in academic programs faculty members are given first preference for teaching, and others are brought in to give a course only if there is no one on the regular faculty able to teach the subject offered. Directors often see this as a constraint to program development. Some of the most interesting and interested instructors are not found on college faculties.

Instructors are seldom considered a part of the program staff, and turnover is high. Instructors are employed to do a specific course and workshop and are paid only if enough women enroll to sustain it. They normally have little contact with one another or with staff personnel in the program although this is less true in academic programs, especially those with a sequenced course curriculum rather than electives. Where instructors had an important role in establishing the program, they are often involved in the decision-making process through participation in meetings and informal conversations. If a program director has control over her own budget or if income is primarily from course fees, she will control the hiring of teachers. In community service programs, the director may work closely with the dean of community services but have little communication with others on campus. A director will often simply keep the administration informed of what she is doing.

Program Staff

Staff cooperation is essential, especially because staffs are small; there is almost no turnover in their personnel. Under the influence of the feminist movement, programs place emphasis on the sharing of authority and responsibility by staff members. Where programs have survived over several years, the size of the staff does not seem to increase, although the division of labor becomes more sharply delineated with the director assuming responsibility primarily for administrative work.

There appear to be three main patterns of staff interaction. The most clearly defined is based on the extended family concept. This is seen primarily in working-class academic programs, in which administrators, staff, and students share responsibility for the program and a premium is placed on mutual self-help. A second pattern involves frequent interaction among core staff but little among instructors; however, the instructors may have close contact with the director. A third pattern, which is rare, involves staff and instructors in frequent meetings as well as intensive informal contact.

Although the in-service education of staff is uncommon, it is found most often in campus-oriented academic programs. In some cases colleges provide reimbursement or released time for staff development activities. Most such activities are on the job, through participation in program development, staff meetings, or consultation with the director. Many programs send directors to conferences and workshops, but funds for this purpose are usually limited.

Counselors. Although 54 percent of the 288 re-entry programs responding on this question reported their greatest emphasis to be on counseling and referral as against courses or public events, less than a third in our case study sample of 36 programs had counselors on their staff. Only five nonacademic programs had one or more full-time counselors, and another five had part-time counselors and/or used student interns. Counseling was not integrated into the curriculum, except when it was a component of a course. In programs where counseling has been integrated into the re-entry program, the director may be on the counseling staff of the college, counselors may be shared with the college, or counseling may be provided through a particular course. Often such a course is taught by the director of other counselors and may be especially designed for re-entry women. Sometimes this course is available through the college counseling program rather than through the re-entry program itself. In most cases, the director does some initial short-term counseling and then refers a woman to a counselor in her program or in the counseling course, or to the college counseling center.

Peer counseling services are often found in re-entry programs, especially for personal problems and for referral counseling. In a few cases the training of peer counselors is extensive and may be part of the program itself. One program even places its trained peer counselors into community agencies. One director expresses concern over the "halo" effect of peer counseling, fearing that women will get sidetracked into counseling when opportunities for employment in the field are limited. Rap groups, led either by professionals or peer counselors, also fill a special counseling need. In addition, programs sometimes borrow counselors from community agencies or refer women to agencies for counseling.

Volunteers. Almost all programs, especially those which are primarily serving middle-class women, place heavy reliance on the use of volunteers. Working-class women have less time or financial leeway to work without compensation. Historically, many programs originated through the efforts of volunteer community groups or through efforts of groups of women on campus with very little funding or real support. It is ironic that continued emphasis on volunteers may prolong the marginal status of programs by relieving the college of responsibility for a more heavy contribution of its resources to their support.

Volunteers are used as receptionists, clerical workers, coordinators, counselors, instructors, librarians, public relations workers, telephone an-

swerers, and locators of community resources. They can use the experience on an internship basis; one program helps interns to explore the areas of education, volunteer work, and employment. Volunteerism can add an esprit de corps that comes from mutual self-help efforts. Many directors, instructors, and counselors got their jobs following some volunteer effort. In this way, the programs can provide opportunities for women to try out new roles, acquire experience and training, develop self-confidence, test out skills and clarify goals, although many women are only looking to keep occupied for a few interesting hours a week.

Several directors see volunteerism as a way to broaden the staging area into which women can move beyond perspective transformation. Despite what one director calls a constant and heavy "creative turnover," a high level of professionalism is possible. In one program, volunteer coordinators, each assigned an area of work, have at least a master's degree and considerable experience in their respective fields.

However, many programs would prefer not to use volunteers, seeing them as symbols of a lack of commitment by the college to the program, a way of doing programs "on the cheap." Nevertheless, once a program has been institutionalized and has won a measure of security, it welcomes volunteers as a desirable supplement rather than as a temporary alternative to a paid staff.

III. ASSESSING CHANGE

1. Psychometric Approaches

The discovery of perspective transformation and the overwhelming evidence that many women experience significant change in the course of re-entry led us to undertake a modest investigation of the utility of established psychometric scales for measuring this change. One dimension of perspective transformation of special interest is the sense of having control over one's life as opposed to feeling at the mercy of external forces. This can be measured by the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control (I–E) Scale.[10] Another instrument that seemed relevant was the Bem Sex Role Inventory.[11] which indicates how people view themselves in terms of sex stereotypes.

Data were collected from 83 women who were participating in programs in four different two-year colleges. Included were four groups: 51 re-entry women; 8 who came to a college women's center for counseling; 16 regularly enrolled, first-semester community college students; and 14 participants in a program designed to help working women manage their careers. The two instruments and a set of questions on educational and career objectives were administered either at the beginning of the semester or a week before the counseling interview and again at the end of the program or, for those in counseling, eight weeks later.

We found that neither the I–E Scale or the Bem Inventory succeeded in significantly differentiating change among the four groups over the period studied.[12] This finding is reinforced by two other studies. Chitayat and Hymer[13] administered the Rotter scale and the Campbell Personal Competence Scale to 67 women attending the City University of New York's preadmission counseling program on three campuses. Neither instrument was found useful for measuring change over the period of the program. Stone[14] used the I–E Scale, the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, and other measures in a controlled experiment involving 64 re-entry women. None of the instruments employed proved useful for comparing change in the experimental and control groups.

In our own study, we found the most provocative differences showing up between groups of women with different goals. Those who hoped to be in a degree or professional training program six months later indicated a much

greater perceived change in self-confidence; they were generally the less educated women. Those who aimed to be employed full-time six months hence showed greater change in the clarity of their long-term goals; these women were both better educated and in more straitened economic circumstances than the first group. Women who limited their aspirations to a part-time job saw themselves in terms of more feminine role stereotypes on the Bem at the beginning of the program; they left the program with no perceived change in the clarity of either their short- or long-term goals.

Stone also found that the area of goals produced the greatest measurable difference between middle-class re-entry women and those in her control groups, who were enrolled in a women's studies program in the college. Re-entry women proved to be more interested in education than in vocational goals, were more undecided about their goals, had more generalized goals, and placed more value on college attendance and education for its own sake. They were also less defensive about reporting self-concepts and had more liberal feminine role perceptions, which were found significantly related to self-concept, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Re-entry women also made better grades than their counterparts in the control groups.

For future researchers it appears that the most productive points of departure for the systematic assessment of perspective transformation and related changes in transitional adults are their expectations, goals, and degree of sophistication with respect to problem awareness.

2. Assessing Perspective Discrepancy

The findings of our national study of re-entry programs in community colleges represent a first effort to build a systematic knowledge base for program-specific assessments and the construction of evaluation models. Such a knowledge base is indispensable for developing an assessment which will identify the qualitative factors that most significantly impede or facilitate progress, and thus make successful program replication possible.

On the basis of the findings, we have developed an assessment model, *An Evaluation Guide for College Women's Re-entry Programs*,[15] which follows the "perspective discrepancy" approach. This is a widely used innovation of the writer and his associates at the Center for Adult Education. The term *perspective* is used as synonymous with *viewpoint*, and our concern is with the content of a perspective rather than the structure of cultural assumptions that have shaped it.

The basic assumption behind the perspective discrepancy model is that educational process can best be understood by examining how those involved perceive and understand the process and themselves in relation to it. By comparative analysis of the viewpoints of those interacting to make a re-entry program happen—director, instructors, counselors, students, administrative staff, college officers, alumnae, advisory board members, and representatives of collaborating community organizations—it becomes possible to learn what is or is not happening and why. Identifying discrepancies in their ordinary day-to-day expectations—regarding goals, priorities, degree of program emphasis, assignment of responsibility, and anticipated agreement with the program expectations of others—permits real and *potential* problems to be identified. Expectations of the key individuals and groups involved in the program development process are also matched to reports of current practice in order to identify other discrepancies.

Findings from the comparative analysis of data produced by the *Evaluation Guide* have proven invaluable for guiding staff development as well as for policy clarification and program modification. This is because they provide insight into the reasons for program progress or lack of progress. While sensitively reporting program strengths and weak spots, the findings minimize the implied threat to individuals that is usually associated with

program evaluation. Because we are interested in discrepancies within and among groups, individual responses to questions are aggregated; only the program director is identified.

Discrepancies in understanding, in viewpoint, or in action among those working together in a program, especially when juxtaposed against aggregate descriptive data pertaining to the program, yield information which illuminates the need for corrective action so strongly that recommendations by outside evaluators become superfluous. In addition to providing dependable information for program improvement, the assessment can be replicated at a later time to establish progress made in resolving the most serious discrepancies; thus the perspective discrepancy assessment approach can be used for both formative and summative evaluation purposes. It can be adapted for use in any program in which people are working together toward common goals.

The *Evaluation Guide*

As part of its field testing and dissemination, 70 directors of re-entry programs met in a series of workshops on the *Evaluation Guide* conducted by the Center for Adult Education in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. Each director agreed to administer it in her own program and report the results. The final draft of the instrument has incorporated this extensive experience.

Use of the *Evaluation Guide* requires no technical expertise; it may be self-administered by a program director and staff. It is organized to obtain responses from the different groups listed above (instructors, students, alumnae, etc.) to a set of questions dealing with major decision-making areas in re-entry programs. The areas include:

1. *Goals*—program goals, women's objectives, perceptions of program success, and recruitment targets and efforts
2. *Organization and administration*—college linkages and decision-making processes; funding and budgeting; staff functions, relations, selections; staff development; evaluation and follow-up; community liaison
3. *Support services*—counseling, testing, child care, women's center, resource library, self-help groups, public events
4. *Curriculum and instruction*—course characteristics, sequencing instructor–student ratio, drop-outs and absences; remedial or refresher courses, student needs assessment; instructional methods, patterns of student participation, uses of evaluation, teacher support roles and problems
5. *Additional questions* determining characteristics of students, alumnae, and staff

Similar questions concerning these decision-making areas have been formulated for each of the groups concerned. Questions are worded either

as (1) *intended practice* questions (e.g., Given present constraints on the program, what instructional methods *should* be used?); (2) *current practice* questions (e.g., What instruction methods *are currently* used?); (3) *opinion questions* (e.g., How successful do you think the program has been?); (4) *background questions*; and (5) *perspective questions* (e.g., To what degree do you think the view of instructors in the program agrees with your own?).

Each of the groups involved is asked to report on current practice concerning goals, organization, and support services (except counseling). The teachers are asked to supply current practice responses on curriculum and instruction. The counselors indicate current practice for counseling. Alumnae are asked questions on their current circumstances and perceptions of the program as they remember it. Students answer questions about changes they may have undergone during the program and on their expectations of the program.

Questions may be administered orally or as questionnaires designed for each of the groups involved and the director. Preprogram and end-of-program questionnaires for students have been included, the latter in two forms, one dealing with intended practice, the other with current practice. Half the students are asked to answer each form. In this way student perceptions about how the program is actually operating can be compared to student perceptions about how it should run, given its present constraints. Each group is questioned about those areas of decision making in which they are most involved. Only the director is questioned fully about all areas of decision making.

The *Evaluation Guide* is meant for flexible use, so that a director may choose to assess any one or more of the decision-making areas and may include only those groups she feels are of special interest. Programs limited to counseling or to a course or two will find portions of the instrument relevant to their circumstances and may disregard the rest.

To the degree that it assists those pioneering women who are creating a new kind of education—an education for perspective transformation—to give form and direction to these efforts, the *Evaluation Guide* will fulfill its promise.

Conclusion

The discovery of perspective transformation as an inductively derived theory of adult development is exciting because it is echoed in the rich literatures of existentialism and phenomenology, psychoanalytic theory, developmental psychology, and constructionist theory in sociology, as well as in the perspectivism of Thomas Kuhn and Michel Foucault, the writings of Hegel, of the early Marx, of Paulo Freire, and of the psychologically oriented critical theorists.[16]

The phenomenon is clearly not limited to women and appears even in traditional cultures characterized by *Gemeinschaft* social relationships. Freire[17] has shown that disorienting dilemmas can be induced to produce perspective transformation through adult education in illiterate adults in traditional societies.

The educational implications are important. If the objective of adult education should be defined in terms of fostering movement toward a higher level of development on a maturity gradient, it is necessary to ascertain the dimensions of development. It appears that one generic process unique to development in the adult years is that identified here as perspective transformation. As handmaiden to development, the education of adults can no longer be defined exclusively in terms of behavior change; nor can its purpose be confined to assisting adults acquire the knowledge and the competencies to implement their plans for action. The most significant behavior change is, in fact, often a function of perspective transformation.

Adult educators can no longer limit their response to felt needs articulated in educational terms by the learners themselves. We must help them look at the sources of these needs as well as assist them to follow their current priorities. Goals, functions, methods, and modes of research and evaluation will need redefinition if educators are to take perspective transformation seriously. This is why the pioneering efforts to create a new kind of education through women's re-entry programs are so important. The innovative character of these efforts has helped to reveal the unique strength of the professional field of adult education.

Appendix: Research Procedures

In line with the principles of grounded theory formulated by Glaser and Strauss,[18] our research objective was to construct a normative description that was derived inductively. To carry out this task, the Center for Adult Education proposed to draw upon its extensive recent experience in the use of grounded theory methodology for program analysis in the education of adults.[19] The normative description would provide the data for identifying key decision-making areas within which specific concerns and options could be delineated. From this benchmark analysis program evaluators could then formulate specific guidelines based on qualitative norms.

The research plan called for a comparative analysis of women's re-entry programs that would employ participant observation, informal and structured interviews, and documentation review. The specific goal was to establish the modal patterns and innovations of (1) organizational and administrative practice, (2) curricular and social interaction, and (3) the characteristics and perspectives of those involved, especially the students.

Our decision to study community college programs was in part influenced by a study being completed by Helen Astin of the University of California, Los Angeles, which primarily reviewed four-year college-based programs of continuing education for women.[20] From her work, we learned that there was a dearth of information about re-entry programs for women in community colleges. Because of this information gap, and because of the large number of two-year colleges, the high proportion of working-class students they served, their community service orientation, their diversity, and their relatively high proportion of adult students, we chose to confine our study to these institutions.

After preliminary exploration, we focused our initial and most continuous field involvement on a diversified sample of 12 programs—5 in the New York–New Jersey area, 5 in the San Francisco Bay area, and 2 in the state of Washington. We selected programs that represented urban, rural, suburban, working-class, middle- and upper-middle-class, and ethnic minority student bodies. The community colleges included LaGuardia, Manhattan, and Queensborough in New York; Bergen and Morris in New Jersey; Laney, Foothill, Diablo, Gavilan, and De Anza in California; and Whatcom and Skagit in Washington. Over 100 sets of observer field notes, including interviews with students and staff, were compiled; each represented a separate visit to these and neighboring campuses. A dozen investigators contributed field notes.

To explore the transformation hypothesis generated from field data, a

collateral interview study was conducted with a sample of 20 women who had recently participated in consciousness-raising groups. As an additional follow-through on the hypothesis, an analysis was undertaken of the re-entry program Soundings, sponsored by the University of Washington Extension.

Early results showed the diversity of re-entry programs to be too great to allow us to infer common patterns of organization and program operation from our limited sample. Drawing upon our intensive field data, we then developed a comprehensive interview schedule covering the organizational, administrative, and curricular aspects of women's re-entry programs. Through a nationwide telephone survey, we identified 24 additional programs that were relatively well developed and compiled case histories of them using this schedule in subsequent field visits to each campus. Highly detailed, structured interviews were conducted in the following colleges: Long Beach City (California), Santa Monica (California), Everett (Washington), Metropolitan (Minnesota), Lansing (Michigan), Wayne (Michigan), Valencia (Florida), Delaware (Pennsylvania), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Moraine (Illinois), Cuyahoga (Ohio), Oakton (Illinois), Cape Cod (Massachusetts), Bellevue (Washington), Middlesex (Massachusetts), Massasoit (Massachusetts), Bucks County (Pennsylvania), Brookdale (New Jersey), North Hennepin (Minnesota), Manchester (Connecticut), Macomb (Michigan), North Seattle (Washington), and Hartford (Connecticut). In addition, field visits were made to the Regional Continuing Education Program for Women, a consortium with headquarters in Philadelphia.

This set of case studies provided comparative data on most of the well-developed re-entry programs that could be identified. Additional data were secured by a mail inquiry sent to 1,172 two-year colleges registered as members of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Respondents totalled 846; 314 of these indicated that they sponsored a re-entry program for women. The three regions in which we had conducted our intensive field study reported the largest number of women's re-entry programs. Such programs were least likely to be sponsored in the South, Southwest, and in New England. A national directory of women's re-entry programs has been compiled from this extensive collection of data.

Two consultants supplemented our panel of six Center analysts; all eight analyzed the data to identify common patterns of program organization and curricula, and common perspectives among those involved. An advanced graduate seminar in adult education at Teachers College collaborated in the field study and in the examination of consciousness-raising processes. Finally, structured interviews were conducted with over 50 alumnae in order to secure evidence on the development of participants after their re-entry experience.

Notes

1. In their *Discovery* of *Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Chicago: Aldine, 1967), Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss suggest an inductive approach to the development of theory through the comparative analysis of similar units of social interaction. Field methods are commonly used for this purpose.

2. Jack Mezirow, Gordon G. Darkenwald, and Alan B. Knox, *Last Gamble on Education* (Washington, D.C.: Adult Education Association, 1975).

3. B. Watkins, "More Women Coming Back to Campus," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 14 September 1974. (Cited in Rose Marie Roach, "Honey Won't You Please Come Home?" *Personnel & Guidance Journal*, October 1976, p. 87.)

4. Jean B. Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), p. 112.

5. Roger L. Gould, *Transformations: Growth and Change in Adult Life* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1978).

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7. Deanna Chitayat and Sharon Hymer, *The New Occupational Student: The Mature Woman*, City University of New York, Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education, Report no. Case 35–76 (New York, August 1976).

8. Ibid, p. 10.

9. Center for Women's Opportunities, Newsletter, AACJC/AAWJC, Washington, D.C., n.d.

10. J. B. Rotter, "Generalized Expectancies for Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement," *Psychological Monographs* 80 Whole no. 609 (1966): 1–28.

11. Sandra L. Bem, "The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 42 (1974): 155–62.

12. Elizabeth Swain Kasl, "Perceptions of Personal Control and Sex Stereotyped Self-Image in Women Involved in the Re-entry Process," Center for Adult Education, Teachers College, Columbia University (New York, July 1977), unpublished manuscript. See also her "Relationship of Undifferentiated Inherests and Sex Role View of Self to Vocational Development in Re-entry Women" (Ph.D. dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1978).

13. Chitayat and Hymer, pp. 43–44.

14. Jessie Marie Stone, "Value Characteristics of Mature Women Students Related to Enrollment in a Women's Studies Re-entry Program" (Ed.D. dissertation, United States International University, San Diego, 1975).

15. Jack Mezirow and Amy Rose, *An Evaluation Guide for College Women's Re-entry Programs* (New York: Center for Adult Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1978).

16. See, for example: Alfred Schütz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Irwin Singer, "Identity vs. Identification: A Thorny Psychological Issue," *Review of Existential Psychology and Psy-*

chiatry 5 (Spring 1965): 140–48; Salvador Maddi, "The Existential Neurosis," in *Psychopathology Today*, ed. R. S. Shakian (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock, 1970); Herbert Fingarette, *The Self and Transformation* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963); Roger Gould, "The Evolution of Adult Consciousness and Implications for Adult Education" (Paper presented to the Bicentennial Adult Continuing Education Congress, New York, November 20, 1976); George Kelly, *A Theory of Personality: The Psychology of Personal Constructs* (New York: Norton & Norton, 1963); John Broughton, "Beyond Formal Operations: Theoretical Thought in Adolescence," *Teachers College Record* 79 (September 1977): 87–97; P. K. Arlin, "Cognitive Development in Adulthood: A Fifth Stage," *Developmental Psychology* 11 (1975): 602–66; Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967); Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969); A. Jon Magoon, "Constructivist Approaches in Educational Research," *Review of Educational Research* 47 (Fall 1977): 651–93; Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1973); G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baille, 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Macmillan, 1949); Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, ed. and trans. T. B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970); J. Habermas, "Moral Development and Ego Identity," *Telos* 24 (Summer 1975): 41–55; and C. A. Bowers, "Emergent Ideological Characteristics of Educational Policy," *Teachers College Record* 79 (September 1977): 33–54.

17. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
18. Glaser and Strauss, *Discovery of Grounded Theory*.
19. See Mezirow et al., *Last Gamble on Education*.
20. Helen Astin, *Some Action of Her Own* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1976).

Education for Perspective Transformation: Women's Re-entry Programs in Community Colleges

This publication reports the results of a national field study of women's re-entry programs in community colleges. It identifies the central educational function of these programs as facilitating *perspective transformation*, considered here a generic process of adult development. In a pioneering effort, women's re-entry programs are mobilizing the resources of higher education to meet the uniquely adult need for the reconstruction of meaning perspectives; this is where their major significance lies. The report analyzes the process of perspective transformation and describes the way programs have facilitated it. Model patterns and problems of program organization, curriculum development, and supporting services are examined and evaluated.

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